

Preface

Municipal planning has its roots in the fourth amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, commonly known as the “police power”. All public land use decisions must protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. These decisions must also obey private property rights, which have been ruled in the courts to mean allowing “reasonable uses” of the property. No municipal decision to regulate land use may significantly burden the landowner financially from the property without proper compensation. If it does, then the private property owner may claim a “taking” in a court of law.

Comprehensive planning equips municipalities with the direction and goals necessary to grow and develop toward meeting the needs of the community. Without planning, many problems arise after the fact. Municipalities put themselves into a reactionary role when they do not take the progressive steps necessary to insure proper development.

A good plan outlines action steps toward implementation and insures that goals are met. It is the intent of the Planning Board to prepare a comprehensive plan that can be used by all those doing business with the Town of Clarence, residents and companies alike.

The Town of Clarence is positioned to achieve its goals due to many variables out of its control. We live in a second ring suburban town of a large metropolitan area. Before 1986, the town has grown at a rate and scale of most small towns in New York State. The development pressures for single-family homes increased significantly since and has challenged the land use regulations of this Town. The town’s character is rapidly changing forcing us as a community to re-examine our goals and policies to achieve our sense of what Clarence should be.

The community has stated that it wants to remain a semi-rural small town. It wants to protect existing farmland and open spaces instead of allowing additional cookie-cutter subdivisions. It wishes to preserve existing historical structures and build at a village scale with neighborhood parks and sidewalks.

There are no Taj Majal’s proposed in this plan or any other grand public works project that have made other places unique in their built environment. However, this plan does create uniqueness for Clarence and sets out to achieve what our resident’s want, a Clarence that is more livable, walkable, social, and a great place to do business.

As with life, many unforeseen variables enter into the picture as our future unfolds. It is imperative that the public planning process continues and reshapes itself with the changes that are sure to occur.

Town of Clarence Planning and Zoning Department
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